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ABSTRACT

The study analyzed the nature of parental and staff expectation for the future achievement potential of 45 learning disabled (LD) students. Forty-five groups of parents and 45 sets of staff members (consisting of a regular class and an LD teacher) were administered the Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale which measures expectations in the areas of academic, social-personal, and economic adequacy. Findings were that the difference between expectations of mothers and fathers and between school staff's expectations was generally insignificant in most areas of achievement; that in most areas of achievement, school staff members' expectations were significantly lower for LD children than their parents; and that birth order had a significant effect upon parental expectations for the future achievement of the LD child. Differences between parents were found in the areas of total achievement potential and social-personal adequacy; while no significant differences were found in the academic and economic adequacy areas. (Author/SB)

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PARENTAL AND STAFF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

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The University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities is supported by a contract (#300-77-0494) with the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, U. S. Office of Education, through Title VI-G of Public Law 91-230. The University of Kansas Institute, a joint research effort involving the Department of Special Education and the Bureau of Child Research, has specified the learning disabled adolescent and young adult as the target population. The major responsibility of the Institute is to develop effective means of identifying learning disabled populations at the secondary level and to construct interventions that will have an effect upon school performance and life adjustment. Many areas of research have been designed to study the problems of LD adolescents and young adults in both school and non-school settings (e.g., employment, juvenile justice, military, etc.)

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Cooperating Agencies

Were it not for the cooperation of many agencies in the public and private sector, the research efforts of The University of Kansas Institute for Research in Learning Disabilities could not be conducted. The Institute has maintained an on-going dialogue with participating school districts and agencies to give focus to the research questions and issues that we address as an Institute. We see this dialogue as a means of reducing the gap between research and practice. This communication also allows us to design procedures that: (a) protect the LD adolescent or young adult, (b) disrupt the on-going program as little as possible, and (c) provide appropriate research data.

The majority of our research to this time has been conducted in public school settings in both Kansas and Missouri. School districts in Kansas which are participating in various studies include: United School District (USD) 384, Blue Valley; USD 500, Kansas City; USD 469, Lansing; USD 497, Lawrence; USD 453, Leavenworth; USD 233, Olathe; USD 305, Salina; USD 450, Shawnee Heights; USD 512, Shawnee Mission, USD 464, Tonganoxie; USD 202, Turner; and USD 501, Topeka. Studies are also being conducted in Center School District and the New School for Human Education, Kansas City, Missouri; the School District of St. Joseph, St. Joseph, Missouri; Delta County, Colorado School District; Montrose County, Colorado School District; Elkhart Community Schools, Elkhart, Indiana; and Beaverton School District, Beaverton, Oregon. Many Child Service Demonstration Centers throughout the country have also contributed to our efforts.

Agencies currently participating in research in the juvenile justice system are the Overland Park, Kansas Youth Diversion Project and the Douglas, Johnson, and Leavenworth County, Kansas Juvenile Courts. Other agencies have participated in out-of-school studies--Achievement Place and Penn House of Lawrence, Kansas, Kansas State Industrial Reformatory, Hutchinson, Kansas; the U.S. Military; and the Job Corps. Numerous employers in the public and private sector have also aided us with studies in employment.

While the agencies mentioned above allowed us to contact individuals and supported our efforts, the cooperation of those individuals--LD adolescents and young adults; parents; professionals in education, the criminal justice system, the business community, and the military--have provided the valuable data for our research. This information will assist us in our research endeavors that have the potential of yielding greatest payoff for interventions with the LD adolescent and young adult.

ABSTRACT

The results of this study indicated (1) that the difference between the expectations of mothers and fathers of learning disabled youth was generally insignificant in most areas of achievement; (2) in most areas of achievement under the effects of all established criteria, members of the school staff's expectations were found to be insignificantly different from each other; (3) in most areas of achievement under the effects of all established criteria, school staff members' expectations were significantly lower for LD children than their parents; and (4) that the child's birth order had a significant effect upon parental expectations for the future achievement of their LD child. Significant differences were found between parents in the areas of Total Achievement Potential and Social-Personal Adequacy. No significant differences were found in parental expectations in the Academic Adequacy and Economic Adquacy areas of future achievement.

PARENTAL AND STAFF EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING DISABLED CHILDREN

Over the years, parents and professionals have given considerable attention to the academic, personal, and social adjustment of learning disabled (LD) adolescents. Academically, the LD population is confronted with a variety of problems including disorders of perception, memory, thinking, and language.

In the past parents and teachers have been mostly concerned with LD children's growth. However, especially for LD adolescents, more attention is being paid to personal and social growth as well as future expectations. While behaviors such as laziness, stealing, daydreaming, overeating, and tattling, may be present indicators of a student's personal and social growth, questions arise as to future indicators of social and personal achievement. The present study was undertaken to measure staff and parental expectations for the future of LD youth. The analysis was deemed significant insofar as such information would prove useful in designing appropriate educational programs for LD youngsters.

Setting and maintaining appropriate expectations for a LD child's accomplishments and performance are among the most difficult problems facing the parents and teachers of handicapped children. For nonhandicapped children, implicit norms for expectations are derived from the parents' and teachers' own childhood memories, ambitions, accomplishments, etc. However, these norm expectations are not totally applicable in the case of LD children. The literature about parental and staff expectations for future achievement until this time has been mostly confined to the physically handicapped and the retarded populations, while

relatively little research has addressed expectations for the future achievement of LD youth.

The majority of studies report a tendency for parents of exceptional children to overrate their children's skills and potential in respect to future achievement (Barclay & Vaught, 1964; Boles, 1959; Jensen & Kogan, 1962; Lavelle, 1977). No significant difference was found between the mothers' and the fathers' estimations of physically handicapped children's future achievement potential. However, a significant difference existed between parental and staff estimations, indicating a parental tendency to hold higher expectations for their children's future development than their children's abilities warranted (Jensen & Kogan, 1962).

Results of studies of staff expectations for the future achievement of exceptional children generally show that teachers respond differentially to the label of exceptionality attached to the student. In all cases, labels were found to lower teacher expectations for the students. As a result, their ability objectively to evaluate present behaviors and consequently indicators of future achievement was biased (Ysseldyke, 1978; Jacobs, 1978; Gillung & Rucker, 1977). Using the Jensen and Kogan Scale, Whelan, Chaffin, Mira, and Renne (1964) considered a global approach to the future achievement potential of orthopedically handicapped students. Age was found to be the most significant variable affecting parental-staff discrepancy scores. The results also indicated that parents were least in agreement when intelligence scores were below 72, and even more particularly when the children were ten years or younger. The younger the child, the more unrealistic the expectations for future achievement.

Sinning (1969) reported that a comparison of parental and staff expectations for the future achievement of 17 physically handicapped children was made in the following areas of achievement with the 1969 revision of the Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale: (a) Total Achievement Potential, (b) Academic Adequacy, (c) Social Adequacy, (d) Personal Adequacy, and (e) Economic Adequacy. Three criteria were used to analyze each area: chronological age, intelligence, and chronological age and intelligence combined. Although the difference between parental and staff expectations was generally significant, parents of children with lower intelligence held significantly higher expectations for their children than did the parents of children with higher intelligence, regardless of the age of the children, in these areas of future achievement: (a) Total Achievement Potential, (b) Social Adequacy, (c) Personal Adequacy, and (d) Economic Adequacy.

Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the nature of the parental and staff expectations for the future achievement potential of LD children. Specifically, the following research questions were raised.

1. Do the mothers and fathers of LD children significantly differ from each other in their estimation of their children's future achievement in the following areas: (a) Total Achievement Potential (TAP), (b) Academic Adequacy (AA), (c) Social-Personal Adequacy (SPA), and (d) Economic Adequacy (EA)? Is there more disagreement between parents in some areas of achievement than in others?

2. Do the staff members who work with LD children significantly differ from each other in their estimation of these children's future achievement: (a) TAP, (b) AA, (c) SPA, and (d) EA? Is there more disagreement among staff members in certain areas of achievement than in others?
3. Do the parents and staff members significantly differ from each other in their estimation of LD children's future achievement: (a) TAP, (b) AA, (c) SPA, and (d) EA? Is there more disagreement between parents and staff members in some areas of achievement than in others?
4. Does the child's birth order significantly influence the way in which the parents perceive future achievement: (a) TAP, (b) AA, (c) SPA, and (d) EA?

Subjects

The subjects of this study were 45 groups of parents including 25 sets consisting of two parents and 20 sets consisting of one parent. In addition, 45 sets of staff members participated consisting of one regular class teacher and one LD teacher. Twenty-five of the parent-staff sets were from a special education cooperative in southcentral Kansas; twenty of the parent-staff sets were from a northeastern Kansas special education cooperative.

Among the LD children whose parents participated in the study, 25 were ten years and over, 20 were nine years and under. Twenty-three of the students had spent two years or less in a learning disability program, while 22 of them had spent three years or more in a learning disability program. In terms of birth order, 14

learning disabled children were the oldest in the family, 13 were the middle children in the family, while 18 were the youngest children in the family. Finally, all children met their respective school systems' admission criteria for a learning disability program. Such criteria centered around the LD definition stated in the definitions section of the general regulations document of PL 94-142 and as set forth in the Kansas State Plan for Education (Kansas State Department of Education, 1979). Most of the LD students' teachers held a Master's degree and had five years or more teaching experience.

Instrumentation

Parental and staff expectations for the future achievement potential of learning disabled children were measured by a 1979 revision of the Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale. The purpose of the scale was to measure a person's particular expectations for the future achievement of a learning disabled child. Twenty-three items of the questionnaire, which totaled 115 points, were used for data analysis. Each of the questions had a value of five points on a five-point scale of "yes," "probably yes," "probably no," "no," and "don't know." The revised Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale yields a total score measuring Total Achievement Potential (TAP) and three subscores which measure: (1) Academic Adequacy (AA), (2) Social-Personal Adequacy (SPA), and (3) Economic Adequacy (EA). Academic Adequacy is measured by the following questions:

1. Will he/she be able to attend college?
2. Will he/she be able to read a magazine like Time or Newsweek?
3. Will he/she be able to attend trade school?

4. Will he/she be able to receive a high school diploma?
5. Will he/she gain normal mental ability?
6. Will he/she always be an academic underachiever?
7. Will he/she have disabilities in spelling?
8. Will he/she have difficulties in reading?
9. Will he/she have difficulties in mathematics?

Social-Personal Adequacy is measured by these questions:

1. Will he/she be able to judge people's moods and attitudes?
2. Will he/she be able to sense the general atmosphere of a social situation?
3. Will he/she do or say the inappropriate thing?
4. Will he/she be able to select suitable companions?
5. Will he/she be able to participate in and to evaluate social situations in the future?
6. Will he/she be invited to parties by others in the future?
7. Will he/she be avoided by others?
8. Will he/she be able to participate in youth organizations, such as Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, if interested?
9. Will he/she be able to participate in "social dates" as a teenager?
10. Will he/she be lazy?
11. Will he/she have appropriate personal hygiene habits?
12. Will he/she be able actively to participate in a musical organization of he/she desires?

Economic Adequacy is measured by these questions:

1. As an adult, will he/she be able to have a regular paying job?
2. As an adult, will he/she be able to be self-supporting?

Validity of the 1979 Revision of the Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale

To determine the validity of the revised Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale, two separate steps were taken. First, three law students ranked and categorized 50 questions into categories of Academic Adequacy, Personal Adequacy, Social Adequacy, Economic Adequacy, and Total Achievement Potential. These 50 questions were either constructed by the author or were taken from the original Jensen and Kogan questionnaire. From this ranking and categorization, 31 questions were chosen as the basis of the questionnaire. Second, 31 questions were given to a group of ten LD teachers who were told to make one further categorization. A categorization occurred when the teachers matched a particular definition with a particular question measuring the essence of the definition. This was done for each of the 31 questions. Results of this categorization were: first, the scale was reduced from 31 to 23 questions. All questions were included in the scale if 80 percent of the teachers agreed that a particular question measured the essence of a particular definition. If the item did not reach the 80 percent mark, it was discarded from the questionnaire. Second, the Social Adequacy Scale and the Personal Adequacy Scale were combined into one scale, the Social-Personal Scale, because the categorization indicated an overlap between the two.

Reliability of the Scale

Split-half reliability was measured on the TAP score, the AA score, the SPA score, and the EA score. In this instance, the test was divided into halves. Items were designated as even and odd. Scores were obtained on the two halves and then correlated. The result was a reliability coefficient for a half test; the reliability coefficient for a whole test was estimated by using the Spearman-Brown formula. The reliability

for the TAP score was .73; the reliability for the AA score was .77; the reliability for the SPA score was .84; and the reliability for the EA score was 1.00.

Variables

To collect data for the study, the 1979 adaptation of the Jensen and Kogan Rating Scale along with a letter explaining the nature of the study was sent to all of the participants. Participants included the mother and/or father, the learning disability teacher, and the regular classroom teacher who worked with the LD child. In addition, an informed consent letter was sent to the parents for their signature. Each parent completed a questionnaire for his or her own child while each staff member completed one for each of the children with whom he/she was familiar. All participants were instructed to complete the questionnaire independently.

The data analysis proceeded according to the established criteria.

1. The child's chronological age--Two groups were used for the purpose of analysis. Children nine years of age and under were categorized as "younger children" while children who were ten years and over were categorized as "older children".
2. The child's birth order--Birth order was designated in one of three ways: youngest, middle, or oldest.
3. Number of years in special class--A distinction was made between LD students who had spent two years or less in a LD classroom or those who had spent three years or more in a LD classroom.

Analysis

The purpose of the study was to compare higher or lower rankings of future achievement potential; therefore, both the total score and the subscores were treated as ordinal data. Siegel (1956) stated that "if the

relation 'greater than' holds for all pairs of classess so that a complete rank ordering of classes arises, we have an ordinal scale." Several non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data. These were: Wilcoxin matched-pairs signed rank test and Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance by ranks followed by multiple comparisons if needed. In addition, a mean score was calculated for each set of scores so that the difference between two different means would become more apparent. All tests were two-tailed. All questions were tested at the .05 level of significance. The study resulted in the following findings:

1. The difference between the expectations of mothers and fathers was insignificant in most areas of achievement under the effects of all established criteria. These results were similar to the results in the studies by Jensen and Kogan (1962), Whelan et al. (1964), and Sinning (1969). In each of the above studies no difference was found between mothers' and fathers' expectations.
2. In most areas of achievement under the effects of all established criteria, the staff members' expectations were not significantly different from each other. These results were in direct contrast to the findings of Whelan et al. (1964) and Sinning (1969).
4. The child's birth order was found to have a significant effect upon the parental expectations for the LD children's future achievement. Significant differences were found between parents in the areas of TAP and SPA with certain variations at each stage of these areas. No significant differences were noted in parental expectations in the AA and EA areas of future achievement.

The evaluation of the effect of the established criteria upon the differences between the mothers' and fathers' expectations indicated that all the differences in expectations were insignificant, regardless of the established criteria. The evaluation of the effect of the established criteria upon the differences in expectations for future achievement among the members of the staff indicated that all the differences in expectations were insignificant in all areas of achievement with the exception that AA in the total population was significant.

The evaluation of the effect of the established cirteria upon the differences between parents' and staff members' expectations for future achievement indicated that all the differences in expectations were significant in all areas of achievement with the following expectations:

1. The difference between parents' and staff members' expectations of the areas of AA and EA when the children were 10 years and over was not significant.
2. The differences between the expectations of parents and staff members in the AA, SPA, and EA areas when the children were nine years and under were not significant.

Finally, the child's birth order had a significant effect upon the parental expectations for the future achievement of LD children. Significant differences were found between parents in the areas of TAP and SPA with certain variations at each stage of these areas of future achievement. There were no significant differences in parental expectations in the AA and EA areas of future achievement.

Discussion

The evaluation of parental and staff expectations provides a needed framework for systematically identifying and cataloguing a set of highly

significant factors that influence a healthy emotional development in all types of children, and particularly handicapped ones. Obviously, an optimal emotional development can arise only from realistic expectations held for the child by parents and staff. The determination of parental expecations for handicapped children should be one of the most important factors for consideration by professional personnel who, in turn, may help parents develop more realistic plans for their children's future. Because the exceptionalities of handicapped youth impose limitatiors on their functioning capabilities, it is necessary for their parents to become aware of such limitations and their implications for appropriate expectations. Without such an awareness, parental planning for their children's future welfare may fall short of their children's needs. Probably the best method to help parents to become more realistic in their expectations for these yough is to identify them as they exist.

Similarly, determination of the expectation of staff members who work with learning disabled youth is beneficial for curriculum planning so that unwarranted pressure for success is absent. Curriculum and appropriate educational methods for achieving it must be designed within the capabilities of each child. In terms of parent education programs, staff members could modify parental expectations for the future development of these children and, thus, insure that parental plans for the future welfare of these children do not fall short of their needs.

Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

As far as can be determined, this was the first study of the difference between parental and staff expectations for students' future achievement to be conducted with LD children. However, needless to say, one study using a population of 45 LD children cannot be regarded as conclusive.

The variables considered here should be reassessed with a larger population. In addition, many more variables should be considered with LD children. Such variables as geographic location of the child and the number of years the teacher had taught are areas for future research. The lack of fathers in the study made it somewhat difficult to provide an indepth account of the data as they presented themselves. Although certain statistical procedures were used to circumvent this problem, the study would have been enhanced by the addition of fathers' scores to be compared with the scores of mothers in order to attain a more powerful result. The validity of the study may be improved by increasing the number of participants used to determine validity. The number of teachers also need to be increased in number in order to improve validity.

Until such research has been carried out, the amount of time spent in parent conferences and curriculum planning for LD youth will be left partially to guesswork. A good grasp of future expectations and what they mean is a necessity. Only then will parent conferences and curriculum planning be carried out as they were meant to be.

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